

Specialty Crop Block Grant Program

Appendix B – Unallowable and Allowable Costs

Unallowable Costs

All costs must be associated with project activities that enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. Failure to mention a particular item of cost in this section is not intended to imply that it is allowable. Please see 2 CFR Part 225 for further guidance on cost principles.

Advertising and Public Relations. Costs of advertising and public relations designed solely to promote a governmental unit or organization.

Alcoholic beverages except when the costs are associated with enhancing the competitiveness of wine grapes and prior approval is given from the awarding agency.

Bad debts. Including losses (whether actual or estimated) arising from uncollectable accounts and other claims, related collection costs, and related legal costs.

Capital Expenditures for General Purpose Equipment. Capital expenditures for general purpose equipment, buildings, and land. “General purpose equipment” means equipment, which is not limited to research, medical, scientific or other technical activities. Examples include office equipment and furnishings, modular offices, telephone networks, information technology equipment and systems, air conditioning equipment, reproduction and printing equipment, and motor vehicles.

Contingency Provisions. Contributions to a contingency reserve or any similar provision made for events the occurrence of which cannot be foretold with certainty as to time, intensity, or with an assurance of their happening.

Donated Services. Donated or volunteer services may be furnished to a governmental unit by professional and technical personnel, consultants, and other skilled and unskilled labor. The value of these services is not reimbursable either as a direct or indirect cost.

Donations and Contributions. Contributions or donations, including cash, property, and services, made by the governmental unit, regardless of the recipient.

Entertainment. Amusement, diversion, and social activities and any costs directly associated with such costs (such as tickets to shows or sports events, meals, lodging, rentals, transportation, and gratuities).

Excessive Airfare Costs. Airfare costs in excess of the customary standard commercial airfare (coach or equivalent), Federal Government contract airfare, or the lowest commercial discount airfare.

Fines and Penalties. Fines, penalties, damages, and other settlements resulting from violations (or alleged violations) of, or failure of the governmental unit to comply with, Federal, State, local, or Indian tribal laws and regulations.

Fundraising. Organized fund raising, including financial campaigns, solicitation of gifts and bequests, and similar expenses incurred to raise capital or obtain contributions regardless of the purpose for which the funds will be used.

General Costs of Government. These include: (1) Salaries and expenses of the Office of the Governor of a State or the chief executive of a political subdivision or the chief executive of federally-recognized Indian tribal government; (2) Salaries and other expenses of a State legislature, tribal council, or similar local governmental body, such as a county supervisor, city council, school board, etc., whether incurred for purposes of legislation or executive direction; (3) Costs of the judiciary branch of a government; (4) Costs of prosecutorial activities; and (5) Costs of other general types of government services normally provided to the general public, such as fire and police.

Goods or Services for Personal Use. Costs of goods or services for personal use of the governmental unit's employees regardless of whether the cost is reported as taxable income to the employees.

Investment Management Cost. Costs of investment counsel and staff and similar expenses incurred to enhance income from investments.

Lobbying. Development or participation in lobbying activities including costs of membership in organizations substantially engaged in lobbying.

Political Activities. Development or participation in political activities in accordance with provisions of the Hatch Act (5 U.S.C. 1501-1508 and 7324-7326).

Replacement of State funds. Grant funds shall supplement the expenditure of State funds in support of specialty crops grown in that State, rather than replace State funds.

Allowable Costs for Specialty Crop Grants (See CFR Part 225 for all allowable costs).

All costs must be associated with project activities that enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. Failure to mention a particular item of cost in these sections is not intended to imply that it is unallowable. See 2 CFR Part 225 for further guidance on cost principles.

Advertising and Public Relations. Advertising and public relations costs that solely enhance the competitiveness of eligible specialty crops.

Advisory Councils. Costs incurred by advisory councils or committees

Capital Expenditures for Special Purpose Equipment. With prior approval from AMS, costs associated with capital expenditures for special purpose equipment with a unit cost of \$5000

or more. "Special purpose equipment" means equipment which is used only for research, medical, scientific, or other technical activities. Examples of special purpose equipment include microscopes, x-ray machines, surgical instruments, and spectrometers.

- *Compensation for Personnel Services.* Compensation for personnel services during the period of performance under the Federal award, including salaries, wages, and fringe benefits to the extent that they are reasonable for the services rendered and they are supported with adequate documentation in accordance with 2 CFR 225 App. B ¶18h.

Communication Costs. Costs incurred for telephone services, local and long distance telephone calls, telegrams, postage, messenger, electronic or computer transmittal services and the like.

Foreign travel. With prior approval from USDA-AMS, direct charges for foreign travel. Each separate foreign trip must receive such approval. For purposes of this provision, "foreign travel" includes any travel outside Canada, Mexico, the United States, and any United States territories and possessions. However, the term "foreign travel" for a governmental unit located in a foreign country means travel outside that country.

Materials and Supplies. Costs incurred for materials, supplies, and fabricated parts necessary to carry out a Federal award. Purchased materials and supplies shall be charged at their actual prices, net of applicable credits. Withdrawals from general stores or stockrooms should be charged at their actual net cost under any recognized method of pricing inventory withdrawals, consistently applied. Incoming transportation charges are a proper part of materials and supplies costs. Only materials and supplies actually used for the performance of a Federal award may be charged as direct costs. Where federally-donated or furnished materials are used in performing the Federal award, such materials will be used without charge.

Meetings and Conferences. Costs of meetings and conferences with the primary purpose of dissemination of technical information. This includes costs of meals, transportation, rental of facilities, speakers' fees, and other items incidental to such meetings or conferences with the exception of entertainment costs as described under unallowable costs.

Professional service costs. Costs of professional and consultant services rendered by persons who are members of a particular profession or possess a special skill, and who are not officers or employees of the governmental unit when reasonable in relation to the services rendered and when not contingent upon recovery of the costs from the Federal Government.

Publication and Printing Costs. Publication costs include the costs of printing (including the processes of composition, plate-making, press work, binding, and the end products produced by such processes), distribution, promotion, mailing, and general handling. Publication costs

also include page charges in professional publications. If these costs are not identifiable with a particular cost objective, they should be allocated as indirect costs to all benefiting activities of the governmental unit. Page charges for professional journal publications are allowable as a necessary part of research costs where: (1) The research papers report work supported by the Federal Government; and (2) The charges are levied impartially on all research papers published by the journal, whether or not by federally-sponsored authors.

Rental Costs of Buildings and Equipment. To the extent that the rates are reasonable in light of such factors as: rental costs of comparable property, if any; market conditions in the area; alternatives available; and the type, life expectancy, condition, and value of the property leased. Rental arrangements should be reviewed periodically to determine if circumstances have changed and other options are available.

Training Costs. The cost of training provided for employee development.

Travel Costs. Travel costs are the expenses for transportation, lodging, subsistence, and related items incurred by employees who are in travel status on official business of the governmental unit. Such costs may be charged on an actual cost basis, on a per diem or mileage basis in lieu of actual costs incurred, or on a combination of the two, provided the method used is applied to an entire trip and not to selected days of the trip, and results in charges consistent with those normally allowed in like circumstances in the governmental unit's non-federally-sponsored activities.